



PSC NEWS

Missouri Public Service Commission

Contact: Kevin Kelly

Phone: (573) 751-9300

Governor Office Building, Suite 900

FY-04-122

PSC CHAIRMAN URGES MORE FEDERAL LIHEAP DOLLARS FOR MISSOURI FAMILIES

Jefferson City (January 14, 2004)---Missouri Public Service Commission Chairman Steve Gaw today sent a letter to members of the Missouri Congressional delegation seeking additional federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) dollars for Missouri families.

“As we stated earlier, the Missouri Department of Social Services has indicated that Kansas City and St. Louis agencies are seeing an approximate 50% increase in new households (first time applicants) applying for energy assistance. In addition, they’ve told us that in the Kansas City area, approximately 70% of their new applicant caseload involves crisis cases, meaning households have either a disconnect notice or have been disconnected. Over half of the new applicant cases in St. Louis are crisis cases. We are told that current projections show Missouri LIHEAP funding for emergency assistance will be depleted by February,” stated Chairman Gaw.

“This is a call for help, we need additional assistance,” stated Gaw. “Current LIHEAP funding levels allocated to Missouri are less than last year’s appropriations and do not match the dramatic rise in the number of those in our state seeking assistance for the first time.”

LIHEAP, federally funded and administered by the states, provides vital financial assistance to approximately 158,000 Missouri households. LIHEAP funding in Missouri is administered through local community action agencies.

The text of the Chairman’s letter is attached.

January 14, 2004

Dear _____ :

I am writing to you on behalf of those Missourians in need of energy assistance money to help pay their heating bills. Please consider supporting a fiscal year 2004 supplemental program appropriation for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Missouri is one of the states that needs additional funding to help families who have either had service disconnected for non-payment or who face disconnection in the near future because they have been unable to pay their heating bills.

According to the Missouri Department of Social Services, Kansas City and St. Louis agencies are seeing an approximate 50% increase in new households (first time applicants) applying for LIHEAP assistance. Close to 70% of the Kansas City new applicant caseload are crisis cases, meaning households have either received a disconnect notice or have been disconnected. Over half the new applicant cases in St. Louis are crisis cases.

Recent projections indicate LIHEAP funds for emergency assistance will be depleted in Missouri by February 2004, weeks before warm weather returns. Last week, Missourians awoke to temperatures near zero. Help is needed.

Even with the recent second allocation of LIHEAP funding to the states, many Missourians still face a family energy crisis. Current funds allocated to Missouri are less than last year's appropriations and do not match the dramatic rise in the number of Missourians seeking energy assistance for the first time.

On behalf of Missouri families, I strongly urge you to consider additional federal funding for LIHEAP. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Respectfully Yours,

Steve Gaw
Chair